

Application No.:10/627,754

Docket No.: 01936.0009.NPUS01

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An online auction server system for enabling bidding over a computer network by remotely located bidders utilizing computing devices for receiving information to be provided to a bidder and transmitting bid information of the bidder, comprising:

an auction service having 1) a preliminary bidding component conducted over a the computer network, said the preliminary bidding component simultaneously offering for auction a plurality of items, each item being offered for a preestablished duration of time, and the preliminary bidding component resulting in a final preliminary bid, a final successful bid being at least equal to the final preliminary bid; and 2) a dynamic real-time auction component conducted over the computer network, and beginning after expiration of the preestablished duration of time following the end of the preliminary bidding component and continuing until a higher bid is no longer received, said dynamic auction component offering for auction consecutively and individually each of the plurality of items from the preliminary auction component, whereby an initial a successful dynamic bid on each item is greater than the equivalent to a final preliminary bid for the item received during the preliminary bidding component.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein proxy bids are accepted during the preliminary auction component.

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 3 wherein a proxy bidder's current bid is automatically increased by a minimum increment in response to a higher bid, ~~said automatic~~

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~~bid increases~~ the minimum increment continuing until no further higher bids are forthcoming or until a maximum proxy bid has been reached.

5. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 further comprising a countdown timer displayed on a screen of each remotely located bidder during the dynamic auction component, said the countdown timer used to inform each bidder of a running time remaining until the item can no longer be bid on.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5 wherein the countdown timer resets in response to a bid being input.

7. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a means for alerting bidders during the dynamic auction component that a specific item of interest is nearly ready to be offered for auction.

8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 7 wherein the means for alerting bidders is an audible alarm transmitted through the computer network ~~output by networked computers being used by bidders~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 7 wherein the means for alerting bidders is comprises a communication external to the computer network ~~telephone call placed to bidders~~.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 7 wherein the means for alerting bidders is an instant message ~~transmitted to networked computers being used by bidders~~.

11. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~7~~ 2 wherein the ~~means for alerting bidders is a pager alert transmitted to bidders~~ communication is one of a telephone call and a pager alert.

12. (Original) The system of claim 7 wherein the means for alerting bidders is an electronic mail message transmitted to bidders.

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13. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein bids in excess of a preestablished bid increment are treated as proxy bids.

14. (Original) The system of claim 3 wherein proxy bids by the high bidder during the preliminary bidding component are carried over to the dynamic auction component.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of conducting an auction over a computer network comprising:

offering over the network a preliminary bidding on items whereby a plurality of items are is simultaneously offered for auction, each item being offered for a preestablished time period; accepting preliminary bids resulting in a final preliminary bid, a final successful bid being at least equal to the final preliminary bid;

offering over the network a dynamic real-time auction bidding for each of the items upon expiration of said preestablished time period ~~whereby said items auctioned during the preliminary auction are offered for auction consecutively and individually with an initial bid equal to a final bid received during the preliminary auction ;~~

determining whether there is at least one dynamic bid during the dynamic real-time bidding greater than the final preliminary bid; and

identifying the final successful bid as one of the final preliminary bid and the at least one dynamic bid.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 further comprising accepting proxy bids during the preliminary ~~auction~~ bidding.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising automatically increasing a proxy bidder's current bid by a minimum amount in response to a higher bid, said automatic bid

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increasing continuing until no further higher bids are forthcoming or until a maximum proxy bid has been achieved.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 further comprising displaying a countdown timer on a screen of each remotely located bidder during the dynamic ~~auction~~ bidding, ~~said the~~ countdown timer informing each bidder of a time remaining until the item can no longer be bid on.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 further comprising resetting the countdown timer in response to ~~an input bid~~ each dynamic bid.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 further comprising alerting bidders prior to the real-time bidding of each item ~~that a particular item of interest is about to be~~ auctioned.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein alerting bidders includes the step of generating ~~is accomplished by~~ an audible signal through the network ~~output by networked computers being used by bidders~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein alerting bidders includes the step of generating a communication external to the network. ~~is accomplished by a telephone call placed to bidders~~.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21 wherein alerting bidders includes the step of generating ~~is accomplished by~~ an instant message ~~transmitted to networked computers being used by bidders~~ through the network.

25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~21~~ 23 wherein the ~~means for alerting bidders is a pager alert transmitted to bidders~~ communication is one of a telephone call and a pager alert.

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26. (Original) The system of claim 21 wherein the means for alerting bidders is an electronic mail message transmitted to bidders.

27. (Original) The method of claim 15 further comprising treating bids in excess of a preestablished bid increment as proxy bids.

28. (Original) The system of claim 15 further comprising carrying over proxy bids placed during the preliminary bidding to the dynamic auction.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ A method for conducting an auction ~~conducted~~ over a computer network comprising:

conducting a first auction portion simultaneously

offering a plurality of items, each item being offered for auction for a
preestablished duration, said computers

a communication over the network causing the display of a first auction portion
status, including a current final first auction portion high bid that is at least equal to a final
successful bid and optionally showing a first auction countdown timer showing a running time
until the first auction portion ends ; and

conducting a second real-time virtual auction portion

offering the plurality of items, consecutively and simultaneously for auction
whereby a successful second auction portion bid will be greater than the final first auction
portion high bid, each item offered for auction during the second auction portion has an initial
established bid equal to a final bid received during the first auction portion, said computers

the network causing the display of the second auction portion status, including a
current high bid and a second auction portion countdown timer showing a running time until a
current bid will be deemed a winning bid unless a more favorable bid is received no further
bids can be input ; and

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resulting in the final successful bid being one of a final first auction portion high bid and a second auction portion bid.

30. (Currently Amended) The method ~~auction~~ of claim 29 further comprising ~~a means~~ for alerting interested users during the second ~~real-time-virtual~~ auction portion that a specific item is close to being offered for bid.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) The method ~~auction~~ of claim 29 wherein the second auction portion countdown timer resets in response to an input bid.

33. (New) An online auction server system for enabling bidding over a computer network by remotely located bidders utilizing computing devices for receiving information to be provided to a bidder and transmitting bid information of the bidder, comprising:

an auction service having 1) a preliminary bidding component conducted over the computer network, the preliminary bidding component offering for auction at least one item, the item being offered for a preestablished duration of time, and the preliminary bidding component resulting in a final preliminary bid, a final successful bid being at least equal to the final preliminary bid; and 2) a dynamic real-time auction component conducted over the computer network, beginning after expiration of the preestablished duration of time following the end of the preliminary bidding component and continuing until a higher bid is no longer received, said dynamic auction component offering for auction the at least one item from the preliminary auction component, whereby a successful dynamic bid on the item is greater than the final preliminary bid for the item received during the preliminary bidding component.